



New York Times and the Reception of “Education for Death”

Presented by the Hampton Roads Naval Museum

Below is an excerpt from the January 17, 1943 edition of the *New York Times* describing the recently released Disney cartoon “Education for Death.” Pay attention to what the author deems important enough to emphasize throughout this short piece.

“Education For Death: On these Pages are Scenes from the Disney Movie Which Depicts the Making of a Nazi.”

“The Nazi Minister of Education once shouted at the director of the American Colony School in Berlin: ‘Tell America that young Germany is in deadly earnest!’ The schoolmaster was Gregor Ziemer and he returned to this country, before the outbreak of the war, when the surveillance of some fifteen Reich agencies made it impossible to continue at the school. Later he wrote a book which he called ‘Education for Death: the Making of a Nazi,’ in which he reported in detail the ruthless precepts and methods of the Nazi way with youth. Now Walt Disney has made a short cartoon movie based on the book.

In a few simple episodes the film sets forth the complete control the Nazi state exercise over the youth of Germany. Even the registry of a boy’s birth is an occasion for a harangue to the parents; they must certify to

his ‘Aryan’ ancestry; they get a whole sheaf of documents they must keep; they are presented with a copy of ‘Mein Kampf.’ When the child is ill they are warned by a Brown shirt against such weakness and against any coddling. The ancient fairy stories are converted into Nazi allegories.

In his first classroom Hans is sent to the dunce’s chair when he admits pity for a rabbit gobbled by a fox: he is told the world only belongs to the strong. He learns fast, and progresses – ‘heiling and marching, heiling and marching’ – through the successive organizations – Pimpf, Jungvolk, Hitler Jugend, Brown Shirts, finally the army, for which he was headed from the time he was born. In the Nazi mind he has had a successful education. He is ready for Hitler – for Death.”